



THE GOSPEL OF  
**Luke**

**SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 2:41-52**

To understand what obedience looks like.

## “Kevin!”

There are few movies that better remind me of my childhood than Home Alone. Directed by Chris Columbus and debuting in 1990, Home Alone presented every parent’s worst nightmare in hilarious fashion; a family vacation wherein the youngest child is left alone to fend for himself against malicious burglars. The family gathers the night before their big trip to Paris in the extravagant McCallister home in a Chicago suburb, and amidst the chaos of multiple families and a power outage that causes the alarm clocks to misfire (no iPhone back then!), they hurriedly rush out of the house without noticing the absence of young Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin). It isn’t until they are on the plane that the troubled Mrs. McCallister begins to go through the list of things in her mind that she feels she must have forgotten when we see her remember, and in a panic cry out: “Kevin!”

In Luke 2:41-52, the holy family travels by caravan to Jerusalem as required by the law to celebrate the Feast of Passover. A day after leaving Jerusalem, however, the family realizes that Jesus is notably not with them! One might facetiously imagine Mary realizing His absence and frantically crying, “Jesus!” In this lesson, however, we learn some important details about the development of Jesus and the lack of understanding Mary and Joseph had regarding His identity.

## Many Years Later

Luke skips many years in his account. In the previous passage, Jesus was not even 6 months old when Mary came to offer a burnt and sin offering according to the law of purification. Now “he was twelve years old” (Lk. 2:42). A good portion of time had passed, and presumably Jesus’ childhood was relatively normal. Below is brief breakdown of some important details:

### **THE FEAST OF PASSOVER**

The family was required by Mosaic law to go to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Passover: “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deut. 16:16). According to this, it was required of Joseph to be in attendance in Jerusalem. Given that they lived in Nazareth, they would have to journey a few days to get there. The Passover celebration commemorated God’s faithfulness to bring His people out of the bondage of Egypt by the final plague in Exodus, and Passover marked the first part of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*. It was often referred to as the *Feast of Passover* in short (Lk. 22:1; Jn. 13:1).

### **12 YEARS OLD**

Jesus’ age is important as well. As a 12-year-old, it was time for Him to learn from his father Joseph (not biologically, but practically and functionally he operated as His dad) how to go and be obedient to the law. After He turned 13, He would be considered a man by custom and obligated to do what all men were required to do, and so this was a training year of sorts. Still, Jesus was young and considered a child, which meant that He would have been with the other traveling children in the caravan. This explains why it took a full day before Mary realized He wasn’t with them: “And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him” (Lk. 2:43-45). The mention of relatives and acquaintances confirms that they were not alone, but in a caravan. To travel that distance alone would be extremely dangerous, and thus it was very common to travel in a larger community. There is no reason as to why Jesus stayed behind, nor whether or not it was intentional; that doesn’t seem to matter to Luke.

### **WISDOM**

Upon returning to Jerusalem, they find Jesus in the Temple: “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (Lk. 2:46-47). The mention of three days should not be read into or equated with the resurrection. The wording that Luke chooses to use when referencing the resurrection is different, in that he says “the third day,” which understands the passing time a little differently than it is here (9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40). The boy is with learned individuals and His understanding and answers are astonishing, especially for His age. His parents did not understand, however, why He is there.

### **THEY DIDN'T GET IT**

Verses 48 continues: “And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” This should not be read as if she believes Jesus intentionally or even sinfully hid from them. Translating language is a science and sometimes the nuance doesn’t connect with how we speak today. She is simply communicating her and Joseph’s worry for their missing child. Jesus responded in verse 49: “And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” His response is

confusing to them; they don't understand what He meant (Lk. 2:50). Jesus, for several years has presumably been a rather normal child, but now at the advent of His adulthood, the supernatural begins again. He sees God as His Father, something that was not common during this time. The Fatherhood of God was only understand in relationship to Israel (Hos. 11:1) and King David and other Davidic kings (2 Sam. 7:14). A personal Father/Son relationship was not yet developed, and thus Jesus' words are confusing at this point.

## The Holy Spirit

Verses 51 says, "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart." Jesus continued to be submissive. He was perfect, even as a child. His time in the Temple was not meant to be disrespectful or disobedient, but rather obedient to the Father, and He "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). His growth was unlike anyone else and the favor of God fell on Him. This brings up an interesting point. Jesus, being fully God is also fully man. He is not 50% God and 50% man but 100% both. He is fully human with a fully human nature, albeit untainted by sin (because of the virgin birth), but He also has a fully divine nature as well. This is what the early church referred to as the *hypostatic union*; the union of two natures, both divine and human. It's important that we recognize this in Jesus' life and actions. He is fully human and obedient to the Father, and thus finds favor with God, though He is also God, but because He is God does not negate the obedience of His humanity and dependence on the Spirit to please His Father.

## What About Now?

One takeaway might be the importance of being obedient to the Father above everything else. Obedience to God trumps obedience to any other person, entity, or group. If God has clearly stated whether we are to do something or not do something, anyone who compels us to act otherwise should be respectfully rejected. This applies to any authority, including government, church, job, or family.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Luke 2:41. What is the Feast of Passover, and why were they required to go to it? (Hint: See above notes)

---



---

2. Read Luke 2:42. How old was Jesus when they went? How much time had passed? Why is His age important?

---



---

### Day Two

1. Read Luke 2:43-45. When they left, who was not with them? How long did it take His parents to figure this out, and why? Who were they traveling with, according to verse 44?

---



---

2. Read Luke 2:46-47. How long did it take for them to find Jesus? Where was He at? What was He doing? How were the people responding to Him?
- 
- 

### Day Three

1. Read Luke 2:48. What did Mary and Joseph think when they saw Him? What did Mary say to Him?
- 
- 

2. Read Luke 2:49. What was Jesus' response to Mary? What is unusual about His response? (Hint: See above notes)
- 
- 

### Day Four

1. Read Luke 2:50-51. Did they understand what He meant? Where did they go after this, and how did Jesus act with them?
- 
- 

2. Read Luke 2:52. What increased in Jesus as He continued to grow and mature?
- 
- 

## Week 9 Discussion: Obedience Matters

In verses 41 through 52, we see several examples of obedience. Joseph is obedient to Deuteronomy 16:16 to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. Jesus is obedient to His Father to stay in the Temple. One thing is clear from this passage; obedience matters! Talk as a group about the importance of obedience and how you can be even more obedient in areas of struggle.

1. Icebreaker: Would you describe yourself as obedient to God? Why or why not?
2. To what or who are Christians to be obedient to?
3. Where do we learn of obedience, practically speaking?
4. Is there ever a time when you should disobey some authority in your life in order to obey God?
5. Is there ever a time you should disobey Scripture in order to obey what you believe God is calling you to do? Why or why not?
6. How often do you read or study Scripture for the sake of being obedient?

## Takeaways:

1. Joseph and Mary travel to Jerusalem by caravan to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread according to Deuteronomy 16:16.
2. Jesus stays behind in the Temple, and His parents come looking for Him, and find Him astonishing everyone with His wisdom.